

A Brief

HISTORY

OF THE

PROTESTANT

EPISCOPAL Church,

Known by the NAME of

UNITAS FRATRUM,

O R

UNITED BRETHREN.

TOGETHER WITH

The Reasons for and against the Privileges
granted them in the *British* Dominions, in the
Year 1749: So as they are inserted in the
Months of *April* and *May* of the *Universal*
Magazine.



LONDON: Printed in the Year MDCC L.

The Clause, pag. 30. l. 36, runs on thus: — Shall produce a certificate, signed by some bishop of the said church, or by the pastor of such church or congregation who shall be nearest to the place where such claim is made; and shall be examined concerning the matters contained in the said certificate, and the due execution thereof; and such person so affirming to the best of his knowledge and belief, in manner herein before-mentioned, or proving by the testimony of other legal witnesses, that the said certificate was duly executed by such bishop or pastor; and also affirming, that he is actually a member of the said church known by the name of Unitas Fratrum, or United Brethren; shall be adjudged, deemed and taken to be actually a member of the said church or congregation, and as such shall be entitled to the benefit of this act, &c.

ERRATUM.

Page 11, line 17, for amonst, read amongst.



LONDON: Printed in the Year MDCCL.



A

BRIEF HISTORY

OF THE

EPISCOPAL CHURCH, &c.

When the Petition of the Deputies of the Moravian Brethren was brought into the H—— H—— of C—— Feb. 9, 1748, Lieut. G—— O—— spoke to the following effect :

Mr President,

THE Petition, now presented, is from people of the first rank in Germany, Deputies for the Moravian Episcopal Church; a church long known to this nation by her friendly intercourse with the church of England: but first I beg leave to say something of their antient history.

The Slavonian countries, to which Moravia and Bohemia undoubtedly belong, received the christian religion from the apostles themselves. St Paul saith, Rom. xv. 19, he had filled all places with the gospel, even from Jerusalem, round about unto Illyricum; and he informs us also, 2 Tim. iv. 10, that Titus was gone for the same purpose into Dalmatia: both which were Slavonian Provinces. In the fourth century Jerome, being born at Strido, a city of Illyricum, in order to advance the success of the faith, received in his own country, is said to have translated the bible into his mother-tongue. In the seventh century these churches increased very much; the sixth synod of Constantinople, held in 680, making re-

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markable

markable mention of the Sclavonians, who would not appear at the said synod, because they abhorred image worship.

In the following age, God opened the door for the gospel in almost all the Sclavonian countries. The emperor Michael III. having made peace with the Bulgarians, and restoring to them the sister of their king, whom the Greeks had taken in a battle; this lady having embraced the christian religion at Constantinople, prevailed with her brother to turn christian; whose example his subjects followed, and even some of the neighbouring nations of the same language, which contributed much assistance to Cyril and Methodius, two Greek bishops, expert in the Sclavonic tongue; who entering into Moravia, in the year 861, converted unto Christ Swatapluck, king of the Moravians, and a short time after Boravogius, Duke of the Bohemians; from whence the Brightness of the gospel darted into Poland, and even into Muscovy.

It also appeareth from hence, that all these countries were converted by the means of the eastern church, and were initiated into the christian religion with the Grecian rites and forms. How the bishops of Rome, who lay even then in wait to make a prey of all the churches in the world, incroached upon this Bohemian and Moravian church, is too long to be related here. It was in the year 940 that the Roman emperor Otho, having subdued the Bohemians, enjoined them by the express order of the pope, to use the Roman liturgy, in the Latin tongue, which did greatly offend the Bohemians; and since that time, there has always been a contest between the Bohemian and Romish churches; the one always laying on, the other always shaking off, the yoke of their Superstitions.

In the next age pope Cœlestinus tried to impose celibacy on the Bohemian clergy; for which cardinal Peter, his Legate a Latere, very narrowly escaped being stoned by the clergy of Prague. After this transubstantiation began to be obtruded: But in Bohemia it was not imposed with the retrenching of the cup of the Eucharist, till the year 1361, when Charles IV. emperor of the Romans, founding the university of Prague, invited over many German, French, and Italian masters and doctors; and these, being trained up in the custom of communicating in one kind, began vehemently to urge it; and the Bohemians, on the other side, set themselves stoutly against it. John Milicius, canon of Prague, and his successor Mat-
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thias Janovius, who was at the same time confessor to Charles IV, were both very zealous to assert the holy communion in both kinds; and for that reason were banished out of the kingdom. †

It was about this time that the Bohemians began to oppose, with all their strength, the encroachments of the Roman see: At the end of the fourteenth century John Hufs, professor of the university of Prague, inveighed very daringly against the overflowing errors of the church of Rome, and that with the greatest applause of the people of Prague. It very much revived his spirit, that in the year 1400 he received from England the books * of John Wickliff, the first of our own reformers; and he encouraged Jerome of Prague to oppose the prevailing errors with the like boldness in the schools, as he himself did in the church. Upon which the university, which was mostly filled with foreigners, passed a censure upon Wickliff's articles. But the Bohemians debated the prerogative of election with the pope's abettors, making it good that it belonged to them as natives; and king Wenceslaus gave the sentence on the Bohemians side, and created John Hufs rector of the university in the year 1409. Two years after, pope John having sent indulgences abroad, to be distributed to all those that would take up arms for the Romish church against the king of Naples, the Bohemians burned all the said bulls in the market-place, together with the letters of the popish prelates. The pope being enraged with this, summoned John Hufs to Rome, & by an edict prohibited the celebration of divine service and administration of the Lord's Supper at Prague: Whereupon John Hufs withdrew from that city, and preached the word of God from town to town, all over the kingdom, until such time as he was cited to Constance, where he went with the safe conduct of the emperor Sigismund: But, notwithstanding the said letter of Sigismund, he and Jerome of Prague were treated very ignominiously, and both condemned to the flames. Hufs was burnt on the 6th of July, 1415, and Jerome the following year, on the 30th of May.

† The last, before he died, uttered these words, 'The fury of the enemies of the truth has hitherto prevailed against us; but it shall not always be so; for there shall arise a mean people without sword or power, whom they shall not be able to deal withal.'

* By the hands of one Peter Payne, an Englishman; some of which Hufs translated into the Bohemian tongue.

The nobility and people of Bohemia and Moravia, heinously resenting the blood and execution of their doctors by the pope, were exasperated in such a manner against the popish party, that in the year 1419 the tumult was so great at Prague, that the governor and twelve senators were thrown out of the windows of the council-house, and forced to fall on the points of the soldiers spears. Not long after Wenceslaus being dead, Sigismund, his brother, seized the kingdom; who enacted many things to the prejudice of the conscience of the Bohemians, and soon after entered Bohemia with a powerful army, and infested it with war for ten years; Zisca, the general of the Bohemians always getting the better.

After the council of Basil, the protesting Bohemians divided among themselves, forming two parties; the one demanding only the use of the cup was called Calixtines; and the other, persevering in all parts of John Huss's doctrine, were properly called Hussites or Taborites. These opposed one another till it came to blows. This was the state of Bohemia till the year 1550, when the quiet-minded of each party, joining together in the common tenets, which all allowed, and laying aside all party-distinctions, formed a congregation, after the form of the apostolical simplicity, calling themselves the

Unitas Fratrum, or United Brethren;

which title is given to them, by way of EMINENCY, to this day*.

These brethren having applied to king Podiebrad, for some place where they might live in safety, and serve God with a pure conscience; the barony of Lititz, in the mountainous places of Moravia, in the neighbourhood of Silesia, was granted to them (the name of the place was called Fulneck) whither many of the citizens of Prague, Bachelors and Masters of Arts, Commons and Nobles, Learned and Unlearned, withdrew themselves, from all parts of Bohemia and Moravia. Their pastors were of the Calixtines, of which Michael Samberg, a pious and devout old man, was the chief; but being solicitous whether that ordination would be valid enough, if a presbyter ordained a presbyter without a bishop, and how they should be able to defend such ordination, they at length agreed to chuse nine persons among themselves by vote; and, of these

* Their first name was 'Fratres legis Christi,' i. e. 'Brethren according to the law of Christ.'

nine, three by lot, whom they sent to the Waldenses in Austria, whose bishop Stephen, getting another bishop, and some of the ministers, to be present with him, he declared unto them what great persecutions they had undergone in Italy and France; how, through many sufferings, they had continued the succession from the apostles times; and creating them three bishops, by the imposition of hands, they conferred on them power to ordain ministers, and sent them away. The same year, 1467, bishop Stephen was apprehended by the papists, and burnt alive at Vienna; and many of the good Waldenses retired to the Brethren at Fulneck, and joined with them. What great persecutions these Brethren underwent is inexpressible; those of 1467 and 1468 were so severe, that, being dispersed into the mountains and woods, they dwelt in caves or dens; and not being safe, even there, they durst not make any fires, except in the night, lest the smoke might betray them: but the history of the Bohemian persecutions, and also the history of the Sclavonian churches, both written by bishop Amos Comenius, having been printed in English*, there is no need to enlarge thereupon.

Soon after these dawns of the reformation, Luther and Calvin preached the pure doctrine; and both of them gave the greatest praises to our Bohemian brethren, as the forerunners of the reformation. They were also received into England under king Edward VI, and countenanced by his successors: He granted to John à Lasco, a minister of these brethren, the church of Austin-Friars; and made him superintendent of the German and other protestant congregations, from more distant countries, as Bohemia, Moravia, Poland, and Hungary. And to speak a few words of their further intercourse with the church of England: Their bishop, Comenius himself, presented the history of his church to king Charles II. in the year 1660, with a moving account of their sufferings addressed to the church of England. He looked upon himself as the last bishop, but Providence was pleased

* The history of the Bohemian persecution, from the time of their conversion by the Greek church, to the year 1632, was printed for John Walker in Pope's-head Alley, 1650.

The history of the Bohemian church is printed under the title of, 'An exhortation of the churches of Bohemia to the church of England, with the history of the Sclavonian church,' and the order and discipline used in the churches of the brethren of Bohemia, &c. printed for Thomas Parkhurst in Cheap-side, 1661.

to direct better, and he lived to see the succession continued by the Polish branch.

In the year 1683, a most pathetic account of these brethren was published, by order of archbishop Sancroft and bishop Compton. They also addressed the church of England in the year 1715, being reduced to a very low ebb in Poland; and his late majesty, Geo. I, by the recommendation of the late archbishop Wake, gave orders in council for the relief of these reformed episcopal churches, and letters patent for their support were issued soon after.

But since the year 1724 their circumstances have altered for the better, and they have wonderfully revived, increased, and spread in several countries; they have even made some settlements in America; in the province of Pensylvania, they have above eight hundred people, to whom the proprietor and governor give a very good character.

In the year 1735, they were disquieted in Germany, and about twenty families went over with me to Georgia. They were industrious, patient under the difficulties of a new settlement, laborious beyond what could be expected; they gave much of their time to prayer, but that hindered not their industry: prayer was to them a diversion after labour. No time was lost in idle and vain amusements; nor did I find that they did less, but rather more than others. I mention this only, because a vulgar notion has prevailed, that they neglected labour for prayer. Many of ours consumed their time in drinking or vicious courses, and were thereby enfeebled, instead of being strengthened for their future labours. I do not say this of all, for numbers of our people acted well, and the effects of their extraordinary labours are still in being. The Moravian brethren were afterwards disturbed by popular commotions. When the people forced all persons to take arms, the Brethren made no contention, but most of them quietly withdrew, after they had paid what they owed to the trustees. I speak of what I know. What other applications they made elsewhere I mention not; but I have heard from good authority that they would have continued enlarging the colony of Georgia, had they met with the tranquillity they seek. Since this, they have made many establishments in Germany, at a great expence: I am assured they have spent a great deal more than one hundred thousand pounds; I hear from others of much larger sums. They therewith have settled numbers
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of industrious people. Much of this strength in men and money might have been acquired by us, had it not been for the uneasinesses which the laws did not protect them from, and which makes it necessary for the parliament to enquire into the matter, in order to remedy it.

These Brethren propose a benefit to this country; they have felt advantages arising from the influence of the proceedings of parliament. Since the parliament of England declared, in a public act, in their favour, a rest has arose to them in other countries. They therefore offer themselves, in gratitude for the said act, to settle many of their people in the British colonies, preferable to establishments where they are now invited by flattering appearances of present protection and the largest privileges. We are now to consider the manner wherein we are to treat this petition. Will you not accept of proposals beneficial to the nation? In case you will not hear these proposals, you cannot receive the benefit, should they upon examination prove advantageous. The benefit of industrious people, who, without expence to the public, will settle in the colonies, must be obvious to every one; even the princes of Germany have been sensible of this advantage. One thing upon this head, which I would not speak of any where but in this house, it not being a proper subject for public conversation. A great prince who loveth armies, and knoweth how to use them, in order to engage these people to settle in his dominions, granted them these privileges which they here petition for, and much larger ones. The king of Poland, the king of Denmark, and other princes have done the same, to encourage them to settle in their dominions: but as all these governments are under the absolute will of the prince, so, though the present may be the best of men, his will may change, or his successor be different in his opinion; and as it is too much to risque the happiness of numbers upon the uncertain life, or more uncertain will of a mere man; the rulers, therefore, of these brethren wisely seek, in a time when they possess a full quiet and peace in Germany, a place of safety, an Asylum, where, if distraction should arise, they may be safe under established written laws. They have enjoyed indeed, in one of our colonies, a temporary, though not a legal possession of the privileges they ask, but they are still under the same inconveniences through the uncertainty of such connivance in the British dominions. And it is not to be hoped or believed, that men will leave the climate they are accustomed to, in the neighbourhood of their native coun-

try, to labour under the same difficulties, the avoiding of which is the only motive of their removal. All they ask is a full liberty of conscience, under which they comprehend the scruples that great numbers of their people have, and which they desire to obviate, viz. the Taking of an oath, and the Bearing of arms; they pray that their Affirmation may be accepted instead of an Oath; and that they may be allowed to Pay, in lieu of Personal Service. You may refuse to hear these proposals, but therewith you refuse the advantages that accrue from them. By hearing you will know, and then be able to regulate what you intend to do. Therefore I think there can be no objection to the sending this petition to a committee to examine the whole, and then you will upon knowledge proceed to do what is fitting.

[This proposal was seconded by that worthy senator V——rs C—w—l, in these words:]

Mr President,

I join in all that my honour'd friend has said, desiring that the petition of the deputies of the Moravian churches, which to me appears extremely reasonable and beneficial to this nation, should be referred to the consideration of a committee.

[How reasonable soever this proposal appeared to the majority, who could not but discern the national advantages, which must naturally follow to the state from every acquisition of wealth and number of its inhabitants, M. Furius Publicola, without once entering into the merits, or attempting to invalidate any single fact stated by the hon. senator, who brought in the petition, replied with great warmth;]

Mr. President,

The petition under consideration contains things of so new and extraordinary a nature, that I must beg leave to dissent from the proposal of having it committed. For I humbly conceive the records of this hon. h—— cannot furnish us with a precedent, wherein private persons, especially such as are reputed sovereigns in their own country, were ever permitted to dictate new laws or privileges in this assembly, without being first recommended from the throne. Besides, sir, I apprehend that the petitioners are a new sect, of a new religion, newly sprung up; though I am not prepared to give you the particulars. And though I would by no means be supposed an enemy to toleration, which is allowed by the laws of these realms, I must observe that this church, or congregational society, Scorn to be tolerated. I am informed, sir, that this sect increaseth prodigiously in numbers every where, especially

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in Germany, where the greatest part of the protestants are run mad by their devices; and that their religion is founded upon political and worldly views. You can't, sir, be unsensible with what care the legislature has always guarded against the increase of Popery in this nation: And I would propose the rejecting the Moravian brethren with as much caution; not that I would be thought to persecute a papist for his religion, and a Moravian for his opinion; but because both these people, so far as I can discover, submit to the authority of a pope, or church, whom they acknowledge to be supreme in temporals; by which means the coercive power of the civil magistrate is destroyed, and the penal laws rendered ineffectual, while their obstinate sufferings will triumph over any thing that can be inflicted upon them. I therefore am persuaded, should this spirit obtain a sanction by law, and be permitted to make converts to their communion, as they have already done with great success amongst us, the consequences will be more dangerous than we can at present foresee. Let us then immediately agree to prevent their further growth in these dominions; which I urge with greater vehemence, because, sir, I can already discern the influence of their insinuations too much in this very h——; because I observe some members espouse their cause, whom I have never thought Guilty of religion. I am at a loss whether I shall stile the petitioners, Jesuits, Papists or Moravians: nor do I desire to know any thing about them; but I am certain, if we don't stop enthusiasm in its first approaches, it will be too late to oppose its insatinations, when great numbers shall be seduced, united, and moved by different motives. Therefore I shall oppose this petition's going into a committee. I am afraid, by the disposition I see in their favour, that it will return from the committee with such force as to overpower the endeavours of the most serious-minded to stop its passing into a bill. And, sir, should it be resolved to commit this petition, I will move that there shall be instructions given to the committee to restrain the Moravian church from making converts; and to punish all those that should join with them in the same communion: Because it appears to me a grand absurdity for this h—— to encourage a doctrine destructive of all government, whose support is a power to defend itself from foreign force and intestine wars; whereas it appears by the tenor of this petition, that should the Moravians ever convert a whole nation or province to their superstition, the said nation or province must of course yield to the enemy and be destroyed; because they pray to be exempt from taking up arms in their own defence.

[It was very much admired that this gentleman could harangue so warmly against the motion, without taking the least notice of the many substantial reasons drawn from the religion (which had been asserted to be truly protestant) and from the industry of those people in support of their petition. And when he was seated, the worthy senator Mr H——, rose, and, addressing himself to the chair, presently discovered the weakness of his objections and insinuations.]

Sir,

The reasons advanced against committing this petition of the Moravian brethren, I hope, will be received by this assembly as they deserve; yet though they carry no force against the motion, I presume to say, they seem to determine the necessity why their petition should be ordered into a committee. Because, should these petitioners be so dangerous to the state, into which they are received, it must be discovered by that means. But on the other hand, should they be found to be an inoffensive, sober, and industrious people, it will be a great loss to the colonies to have missed the opportunity of acquiring the addition of a number of sober and industrious subjects. And as to that insinuation, They scorn to be tolerated; I humbly presume it cannot be fairly laid to their charge. How can a people, who voluntarily petition for it, and earnestly request that liberty amongst us, be suspected to Scorn toleration? Nor can I see how the doctrine of not bearing arms can be destructive to government, so long as the petitioners are willing to contribute in money, and are ready to pay all legal impositions towards the raising and maintaining the militia and navy. I am also of opinion it would be departing from the justice and equity, from which we should never deviate, should we refuse to hear the proposals of a people, whom we have already received under our protection, by granting them the affirmation instead of an oath, in the case of naturalization. And in fine, this application to us from a foreign protestant church appears to me to be the effect of their gratitude; to be a token of their thankfulness for favours already received; and therefore ought to be accepted as an address of grateful minds, submitting themselves to the protection and government of our laws; and as such this petition should recommend the Moravian brethren more strongly to the consideration and favour of this hon. h——.

[Lucius Valerius Flaccus continued, and spoke to this effect:]

Sir,

Sir,

I am clearly of opinion that every opportunity and proposal for the better settling of our colonies ought to be embraced and considered. — It is a fundamental maxim in sound politics, that the greatness, wealth, and strength of a country consist in the number of its inhabitants. And, agreeable to this maxim, all wise states and republics, even when arrived at full growth and firm establishment, have from time to time, invited and encouraged foreigners to settle amongst them, and incorporate with the natives, which in the end never fails to increase the riches of both. What raised the united provinces to their grandeur and power? And what so greatly increased the revenues, and improved the estates of the natural-born subjects, as the encouragement given by the late and present kings of Prussia to the subjects of other nations to settle there? But we have no need for foreign examples. These people were well known to our forefathers, whose wisdom and zeal protected and provided for them. So that, sir, what has been thrown out against this petition, for want of a right understanding about the petitioners, is so weakly supported that I am at a loss to conceive, how any member of this assembly, who ought to judge of every case proposed in it, without prejudice and partiality, and who has the welfare of his country at heart, can produce such objections, amongst which that request of an exemption from bearing arms is the most plausible; though if we consider the bloody wars of their forefathers, and the natural bent of human nature to run into extremes, it would be easy to account for this proposal: and on the other side let it be remembered that this request is neither new, nor found to be dangerous. What does that gentleman think of the large body of Quakers so long ingrafted amongst us? Theirs is near a parallel case to that before us—They do not bear arms—yet I have never heard any complaint against them on that account. Have the colonies suffered by this pacific disposition? or don't we, to their great credit, find their province of Pensilvania in a most, I was going to say in a more flourishing condition than some others? And as I am convinced it is the interest of this nation to increase its strength and power, by increasing the number of its subjects, especially such as are sober and industrious, in America; and as it is notorious that our laws do not compel all English subjects to do personal service in time of war; so it is my opinion, that it would be inconsistent with our principles of policy to reject the consideration of such promising
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and beneficial proposals; and that the petition ought to be committed; that the petitioners may be permitted to support their allegations; and then only be dismissed, if they can't answer such objections, as shall be raised, to the full satisfaction of this hon. assembly.

This argument was farther pursued by the senator Pomponius Atticus, who observed, that the difficulties, which had been started against this petition's going into a committee, could surely have no weight with those who take time to consider of persons and circumstances, before they condemn them. For my part, continued this honourable gentleman, I think it ought to be our first care to secure these people to our interest. Their numbers and wealth must increase our power and strength in our colonies; and when they have made improvements, and have their families and possessions to defend, it will be their own concern; they will never give up all to the sword of a tyrannical invader. Nature itself will prompt them to repel force by force, as the story goes of the Quaker, who, spying a privateer sailing down upon him, hailed the enemy, and told him, that, though he intended him no harm, he was inclined to fire upon him, unless he would keep out of his way; which being not sufficient to oblige the privateer to alter his course, and the mate trusting to the strength of the ship, and asking the Quaker, his master, leave to run the privateer down, was at first answered with a pretty deal of confusion, that he would have nothing to do with it; but when the Quaker observed his man at the helm steer wrong, he cried out, Friend John, if thou art maliciously inclined, thou must steer larboard; and, by steering larboard under full sail, he ran the privateer down, and sent her to the bottom of the sea.

L. Junius Brutus, concurring with the motion, delivered himself after this manner: Sir, the hon. gentleman, who has declared against committing the petition of the Moravian brethren, I am confident, had not considered the force of those arguments urged in their favour by the hon. gentleman, who spoke first; because, as he is a friend to religion, I should have expected from his candour, less warmth and opposition to the petition, and against the profession of a set of people, who, of all other christians, conform the nearest to our happy church-constitution. But I hope what has been and remains to be said will evince that these people do not attempt to bring in a new religion amongst us.—The tragic history of their famous martyrs John Huss and Jerome of Prague, is known to every body.—The intercourse of their brethren with our country, for almost

most four centuries, from the dawning of the reformation, by the preaching of Wickliffe in England,—Their episcopal constitution,—The correspondence of their bishops with ours,—Their succession, their discipline, their morals, and, above all, their faith, should recommend and endear them to every true Englishman, who is sincerely attached to the established church of his country. It was a distinguishing principle of piety and charity in the reign of king Edward VI. to assist the foreign protestants, and to receive them with all possible tenderness and compassion, and to put them into the methods of life, when they in great numbers came over to seek liberty and safety, without nicely examining into the reasons of abandoning their native countries. And, what is worthy of your present attention, they were allowed to form themselves into distinct congregations, and to have their own pastors, and the rites of religion that were most familiar to them, till by degrees they should become capable of understanding our way of worship, and of their own accord fall into it. For they were so well inclined to episcopal government, that they seem all to have submitted to one chief superintendent John à Lasco, a Polonian nobleman; and to whose memory the petitioners pay the greatest regard, deriving their establishment, in this kingdom, from him; which, I hope, will satisfy the gentlemen in the opposition that the Moravian church is neither a new religion, newly sprung up, nor were they unknown to our forefathers, whose wisdom and zeal protected them and provided for them.

It was hinted, they have multiplied greatly in numbers, in all countries where they spread.—A circumstance, so far from being treated to their disadvantage, that, I humbly presume, it should engage us to be more ready to admit their petition: this I am clear in, their numbers can never be too great for a country of the extent of the British colonies in America.—Nor am I able to discern, how obedience to the authority of their church can be accounted a crime; if it is a fault in that gentleman's opinion, I doubt not but the majority of this assembly wisheth, that all our people were guilty of the same.—As for the motion, for a provision to hinder these people from making converts, and to punish those who join in communion with them, I must declare my opinion, it is directly contrary to the laws of the land; we must either not receive them, or, if we admit them to partake of the privileges of British subjects, we must grant them all the liberty of conscience to which all other British subjects are intitled. And, therefore, I join in
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opinion with the honourable senators that are for referring it to the consideration of a committee.

On the 14th of March, 1748-9, I——g——O—— read the report of the committee, and delivered himself to the following effect.——It has been made appear, that the church, known by the stile of Unitas Fratrum, is an antient, apostolical, and episcopal church; that it was originally planted by the Greek church, and has been acknowledged as such by the synod of Constantinople, so lately as in the year 1740, whose commendatory letters to the dignitaries of the eastern churches, in favour of these brethren, are here before us; as are, also, the vouchers of their orthodoxy, signed and sealed by the synod of Lyssa in Great Poland, on Feb. 10th, 1683, and presented to K. Charles II. whereby it is proved, that having resisted all the attacks of the Roman see for above seven hundred years, and obliged to withdraw from their native countries of Bohemia and Moravia, where the power of popery greatly prevailed, they have preserved the purity of the Christian doctrine, and their apostolical rites and episcopal constitution in the greater Poland and Polish Prussia; for which, we find, the learned and truly pious archbishop Cranmer and bishop Latimer, martyrs for the protestant faith, respected them much; besides the many testimonies we have of the same regard paid them by Luther, Calvin, Bucer, and other eminent reformers at home and abroad; and, afterwards, by the whole bodies of Lutherans and Calvinists, who united with these brethren in the synod of Sendomir in Great Poland in 1570.——What has been said of their being known in England in the days of Wickliffe, and of their kind reception under king Edward VI. is incontestable; and, it further appeareth, that our sovereigns of later years, namely, king Charles II. and his late majesty, king George I. the defenders of our faith, thought them worthy of their royal protection, by the letters patents which they granted for the support of this episcopal church, reduced to the utmost distress by the persecutions which the steadfastness of their faith had exposed them to in Poland, Bohemia, and Moravia; and, since it may be presumed, that, next unto divine providence, these brethren do owe their very being and existence to that seasonable aid they have had from hence, shall we, can we, deny our petitioners, the church, that has, as it were, sprung out of their ashes, and, from the blood of their martyrs, the liberty to settle amongst us, to incorporate with us, and to improve our colonies with their labour and riches, as well as the purity of their doctrine and good morals, at the expence of those two
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small requests or privileges which they ask ; at a time the same providence, which so wonderfully preserved them, has raised them to a flourishing state, and enabled them to make considerable settlements in Germany, to the amount of (I will not say for certain, but) a prodigious sum ; and, to do the like in these dominions, out of a point of gratitude, and without any charge to the government ?

Nor do I conceive it can be amiss to observe, how much the elector of Saxony and the king of Prussia endeavour to gain these brethren to settle in their respective countries. Their predecessors have always, for two hundred years past, granted them an asylum, and free liberty to exercise their religion ; and, the reigning princes of those countries, have lately renewed their friendship, and invited them into their dominions ; and they have actually made several settlements in Silesia. But as the continual increase of their numbers, by fugitives from Bohemia and Moravia, or by converts from other parts, might probably alarm some of the German powers, by appearing too considerable a body, these brethren have, from time to time, at their own charge entirely, sent considerable numbers of their people into his majesty's plantations in America ; where, I, myself, amongst others, can testify, that they are an inoffensive, sober, quiet, and industrious people ; and where they would have already made much larger settlements, had they at first been properly encouraged, and not laboured under some aspersions, through prejudice, arising from the false informations of their enemies.

And I am well informed, that this petition from an episcopal church to be exempt from bearing arms, and to be allowed their affirmation instead of an oath, does not proceed from the said brethren's holding it any wise unlawful to take an oath, or to bear arms, which they do not teach ; but it ariseth from a desire to free those men of their communion from any compulsion in such like cases, who are scrupulous about these points.

This being seconded and confirmed in every point by several others, who spoke to the same effect, the b— was ordered to be prepared ; and it was likewise ordered to print the report, and the most considerable of the vouchers relating to England, and extracts of the rest.

March 21st, 1748-9. Upon reading the b— the second time, the president informed the h—, that, upon a careful perusal, he had found the b— contain more than could be properly understood by the title, as it contained the same exemp-

tions in Great Britain and Ireland, as the title seemed to confine within the British plantations in America. But he referred it to l— g— O—, for the reasons of this extent of the privileges petitioned for by the *Unitas Fratrum*.

L— g— O—, therefore, subsumed, and spoke to the following effect.—Unless the exemption of taking an oath be extended to all the British dominions, we do not allow the brethren a true and effectual encouragement to settle in our colonies; because any limitation in this point will oblige them to transport their people from Holland, which would be not only inconvenient for them, but prejudicial to the trade and navigation of this kingdom; as we must thereby lose the profits arising from their stores of provisions, and other necessities on those occasions; or else it will lay them under this inconsistency, to be subject to those very difficulties here, from which we exempt them in the British dominions in America. Besides, I conceive that the same law which exempts them from taking an oath in the British colonies in America, does imply the same privilege throughout all the British dominions; because those colonies are subject to our laws, and appeals are frequently made from their courts to ours in England. But willing to obviate every dispute about such things, which might arise from the ambiguity of an act, and which would be very disagreeable to them, it has been thought most advisable to mention expressly in the b— what only appears implicitly in the title, so as to encourage them, without any restraint, to make such settlements, to found such seminaries, and to make such regulations in every port and place within these dominions as they shall think proper, for the reception of their German brethren, and for providing them with every thing necessary, as people do that are at full liberty on their own estate, and for enabling them to traffic, and to exercise their respective trades and callings, which in the end must conduce greatly to the interest of the whole nation. We cannot prescribe to them, who shall go to America, nor can we oblige them to transport all their German brethren to come here to join with them.—That must be left to their discretion.

These reasons appeared so satisfactory to the whole h—, that the b— passed without any alteration. However, it had like to have met with a different fate in the h— of l—, where it was taken into consideration on the 26th of April, 1749. When

C. Plinius Cæcilius introduced the debate, with a declaration that he had no objection against the subject matter of the
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act before them ; but that he would state some particulars, which he apprehended ought to be amended in the manner of wording it. — The title and preamble, said that noble l——, relate only to the encouragement of the Unitas Fratrum in America ; but the enacting part extends the privilege of the affirmation to Great Britain and Ireland also. Whereas, I am of opinion, that, should the proceedings made in America, upon a single affirmation, be made valid in our courts, when transmitted here, it would sufficiently answer the purposes of the b——, although the affirmation should be confined to the British American colonies only. Again ; the exemption from bearing arms is both without a precedent, and, I fear, may be productive of many bad consequences, if it be not particularly confined to the Moravian brethren ; for, it may be construed to extend to hinder the pressing of men in time of war for the public service ; and if so, what must be done in case our British subjects should join with them, and screen themselves under the privileges of these brethren. — And, thirdly, I think the very manner of wording this b—— is capable of misleading the people, who hope for the benefit of this act ; for should they rely on the certificate as a sufficient evidence of itself, when produced, without any other evidence to prove that such certificate is duly executed, I apprehend no judge would, from that clause, think himself obliged to take notice of it ; except the execution of such certificate by the bishop or pastor should be proved by a witness upon oath, which may not easily be procured. It also might be difficult for them to prove, who is the nearest bishop or pastor in America ; or, more difficult to prove, who is the nearest to Westminster-hall. Indeed, the last clause, which requires the leaving the hand and seal of their bishop or pastor with the board of trade, seems, in some measure, to obviate this difficulty, and to oblige the judge to take cognizance of the hand and seal of the bishop ; but, I must add, that this is a proceeding unknown to our laws : our courts of justice take no cognizance of the seals or certificates of our own bishops, except in cases of marriages, or, where they have immediate jurisdiction ; in which cases, their certificates are in the nature of records, and decrees of other courts, and, as such, they are admitted in evidence. In all other cases, where our bishops have no jurisdiction, their acts must be proved in the same manner as the acts of all other men ; and, if the law takes no cognizance of the seals of our own bishops, much less does it of those of foreigners ; as we may exemplify in many cases, during the times of popery in this land ; for

even then, if a person was a monk in a foreign monastery, he was never allowed to prove himself such by the certificate of the foreign abbot, and was always obliged to be tried as a layman, because there was no possibility of proving himself to be a monk, in the eye of our law.—Therefore, instead of a certificate, I refer it to your consideration, whether it would not be more advantageous for the parties concerned in this act to be examined in the nature of a Voet Dire, whether he be, or be not a member of such a church, before he should be permitted to be examined in chief; and to be liable to the same penalty as one that is perjured, in case he should falsely affirm himself to be a member of that church, when, in fact, he is not.

M. T. Cicero replied: I presume that the b— before us has been well considered, drawn with the greatest care, and communicated to the brethren by their deputies, who cannot answer what effect any alterations may have upon the minds of their constituents, whose gratitude for the act already passed in their favour, and the great idea they conceive of British liberty, dispose them to become British subjects; and, whether this is not an object worth the granting of those privileges, I submit to the wisdom of this h—.

As to the objection against the affirmation extending to Great Britain and Ireland; it ought to be considered, that all law-suits commenced in America, for some certain sums, may be appealed or brought to England, after they are come to a decree or end judgment; so that the sentence justly given in America, upon their affirmation, must be void here, if their said affirmation cannot be given in evidence in England.—Besides, such an exception would greatly embarrass those who should be appointed to defend the just rights of their brethren in England, by commission from America; and put them in a much worse condition than either Jews or Papists under our laws, for they are permitted to swear, the one on the Old Testament, the other on the Gospels, in all civil matters; and, as the laws of all nations allow the evidence of every people, when averred upon their own country gods, and given according to the rites of their respective nations, shall it be said that Great Britain, a country under christian government, did ever refuse to admit the solemn affirmation of christians and protestants, and given in the presence of almighty God in England, though the legislature accepts of it in America? which, in my humble opinion, is a tacit insinuation, that God is more present in our colonies than amongst ourselves.

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Nor am I for abridging this privilege, so as to confine it to Germans only ; because such a limitation would presently deprive the brethren of those privileges they so earnestly request. —We are not enquiring into their articles of faith ; but, I dare say, that, whether his faith be well grounded or not, no man will settle himself in a country for conscience sake, where his son, by being born there, shall lose the privilege granted to his father ; or, where the man himself, after seven years continuance therein, shall be deprived of those advantages by becoming an Englishman, which he had a right to before he was such. —Again, to consider this argument, in regard to those who may join themselves to these brethren ; any one who is a christian must know, that, as such, he cannot refuse to admit into his communion those who desire to be christians. But the discipline of the Moravian church is so well instituted for preventing irregularities, that it cannot be supposed calculated to gain many converts ; except it should be granted that the world, in this age, is suddenly inclined to renounce the joys and pleasures of this life ; and, by this limitation, we shall not lay so great a restraint on them, as upon those few, who may chuse to embrace their doctrines and way of life : and, shall an Englishman be deprived of the liberty of publicly avowing the sentiments of his soul ? —Besides, I cannot apprehend how it is possible to word such a limitation ; if it be expressed by confining the privileges to the German-born brethren, you exclude every Bohemian, Pole, &c. as also all the French, Italians, and other foreign protestants in their communion, and who will naturally remove into such places where they can enjoy the most safety and liberty. If we except, in general, the subjects of Great Britain, all foreigners fall under that denomination, during their abode in these dominions ; and, if we should limit the exception to the native-born subjects of Great Britain, we exclude their children born amongst us ; if we forbid the English, Scotch, and Irish to join with them, we shall prohibit the conversion of the English, Scotch, and Irish papists by their ministry ; and, in a word, we shall strike at the act of toleration, which gives liberty to all of chusing their opinion.

I also am for retaining the clause about the certificates, for I think, as it stands, it is a very proper regulation ; and, indeed, a restriction imposed upon the brethren, by those who wished to bind them down, in such a manner, as to be always able to know the certain state of their church, by obliging them to register their bishops and pastors at the board of trade ;

so that to take away, or to alter this clause, is, in effect, to lessen the authority of the government: and, I shall only add, this clause also, as it stands, will effectually prevent any from pretending to their privileges, who are not really of the brethren; for the bishops and pastors become answerable not to grant certificates to any, who are not of their church.

M. Agrippa then gave it as his opinion, also, that he could not apprehend any inconveniency to the state, to privilege an industrious, opulent, and conscientious people, who scruple to take an oath, to give their affirmation instead thereof, throughout all his majesty's British dominions.—No inconveniency has risen from the same privilege granted to the Quakers; and, I remember, that, in the debate on the act for making their affirmation perpetual, it was my opinion, that this privilege ought to be granted them for our own benefit, as well as for satisfying their consciences, because cases might happen in which their evidence would be necessary. How far I was right in my argument, a case, that happened soon after, plainly justified.—The late duke of Newcastle's will was witnessed by Dr. Heathcoat, who was a Quaker; and as he scrupled to take an oath, the said will could not have been proved, and, consequently, the present duke of Newcastle must have lost his estate, if the doctor's affirmation could not have been received in evidence thereof.—It is true, our prelates strenuously opposed the said act; but, being convinced that no inconvenience has risen from it, and that the making of the Quakers affirmation perpetual has proved a public benefit, I find they are all united in favour of the b— before us.

Nor do I apprehend the least hazard to the state from the other part of the b—, which is to exempt the brethren from bearing arms. It may be, that there may be many amongst those peaceable people, who do not chuse to fight, yet, I am confident, self-preservation is so ingrafted into the constitution of every mortal, that it will teach them to defend their lives and properties, or, to procure others to do it for them, if they are not willing to do it themselves; and I can give you an instance of this very nature in a man, who afterwards made himself very well known to the public; this was the late sir Charles Wager, who in his youthful days, being mate of a ship, commanded by a Quaker, was attacked homeward bound from America, by a French privateer. At first the Quaker called, and told the Frenchman, that he had no inclination to fight, and that he would do him no damage, provided he would alter his course; but finding the enemy bore down more
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and more upon him, and that his property was in danger, he added, Friend, I perceive that thou art not well inclined, and I advise thee to take care of what thou art about; for though I will not fight thee myself, perhaps my man Charles will; accordingly, Charles was ordered to fight the ship, and took the privateer, which was the foundation of his fortune. — It may also be observed, that the principle of not fighting does not make many converts, and soon wears out. In the last century, there was a sort of Anabaptists in the canton of Berne, who took up this doctrine of not bearing arms; a doctrine directly contrary to the policy of that republick, whose dependence is very much upon war; and, having obtained leave to withdraw themselves, many of them settled in America, became a very useful people, and, I am informed, have now entirely lost their scruples about bearing of arms. — I wish our Moravian brethren may succeed in making many converts in America; but, I am pretty sure, that such of them as scruple to defend themselves, will find no proselytes to a doctrine so repugnant to nature.

I would not be interpreted in any wise to speak against the Quakers; but, I can say more good of the brethren, whose excellent scheme is not so narrow, nor so stiff, as that of other protestants. I may compare it to a casting-net over all Christendom, to take in all denominations of Christians: if you like episcopacy, they have it; if you chuse the presbytery of Luther, or of Calvin, they have that also; if you delight in Quakerism, there is a people amongst them that have something of that, and of every denomination of christians, except Popery. — And, I am persuaded, that had our reformers in England had only half the sense, and followed this plan of the brethren, instead of quarrelling amongst themselves, their endeavours would have produced much better effects.

As for the antiquity of this episcopal church, I do not rightly know how old it is; but we have a clear account of its existence for above one hundred years before our reformation; that they strove zealously against popery, and that their martyrs, John Hufs and Jerome of Prague, did suffer for the same, and (to the eternal shame of the emperor Sigismund, who broke his safe conduct) were burnt at Constance in the years 1415 and 1416; nor am I certain whether those two martyrs would have scrupled taking up arms in their own defence.

But what I know, and what is most material for us to consider, is, we greatly want to settle our colonies: and every man, who is possessed of any art, or has any substance to carry

ry thither, is a subject to be encouraged: and shall we then demur, and raise difficulties against the admission of an antient protestant, episcopal church; a numerous, quiet, industrious, good, and wealthy people, who desire only two little privileges for such of them, who have tender consciences? I could wish they would all come over, and settle here, or in our American plantations.

As for those clauses intended to ascertain such people as claim the privileges of this church, I am of opinion, that as the Quakers are not obliged, when their affirmation is tendered to them, to bring any proof of their being Quakers, but are admitted as such upon their own affirmation, and no inconvenience has proceeded from it; so the Moravian brethren need not bring any certificate, but should also be admitted, as such, upon their own affirmation. Nor could there remain any difficulty in the b—, should these clauses be entirely dropped.

These reasons and illustrations of facts seemed to remove all objections to the affirmation, and exemption of bearing arms; but, l— H—x replied, that he could not come into that motion of dropping those clauses, by which the members of the brethren were intended to be ascertained; because he apprehended, that those clauses would be necessary both for the brethren themselves, who being a formed society, could not allow any man should be at liberty to declare himself to belong to them, whom they had no reason to acknowledge for a member of their church; and for the government, since without such a method it could not be certainly known who might have a just title to those privileges, which may be granted by the act; and, therefore, he added, though I am not as yet prepared to shew how the difficulties, which have been stated by one of the noble l—, may be properly removed; yet it is my opinion, that these clauses ought to remain a part of the b—; and I hope an expedient will be found to satisfy all parties.

L— S— pursued this argument; and gave it as his opinion, that the first clause asserted no foreign jurisdiction at all, but was intended only to prove, that the person, who claims the privileges of the act is a real member of such a society or church; and a certificate of this kind is no more than an affidavit, common in England, in parallel cases, which hath no connection with those certificates mentioned by a certain noble l—, as never to have obtained credit in the present, or even in the Romish times; because they always suppose properties,

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or men's lives, or other reasons foreign to the question in debate ; and, therefore, joined with the noble l— that spoke last, for retaining the clauses about the certificates, as part of the b—.

T. Maximus Caledonius corroborated all that had been advanced in favour of the b—. I think the requests of the petitioners are extremely reasonable ; and, that the acquiring of such a good and conscientious people is an unquestionable benefit, not to the colonies only, but to these nations in general ; besides, I am of opinion, we grant them very little, if any thing at all. I must pay a great regard to the antiquity and excellency of this church ; and to its discipline, universality, and charity, which receives protestants of every denomination into its communion. As to the particular privilege of the affirmation, let me remark, that the affirmation, recited in the act, is a more solemn oath, than any form of an oath used in England. I should even prefer it to the form of the oath in my own country ; for the strictest definition of an oath, I apprehend, is an affirmation made in the presence of almighty God, and calling on him to be a witness to the truth of what is then solemnly declared.—Again, as to the exemption from bearing arms, as long as they are willing to pay in lieu thereof, I am for dispensing with them in this point also ; which, I suppose, ariseth from a scrupulosity, which once actuated the anabaptists of Switzerland, about fifty years ago ; and may probably subside in success of time, as a certain noble l—d has observed, it has already done with them in America. And, thirdly, the clauses about certificates appear to me to be a wise regulation, not to be mended by the alterations proposed. Nor can I imagine any judge will admit of such a certificate, before he, in course, has asked the person, who claims the privileges contained therein, whether he be a real member of the Moravian church ? Whether he will declare it in the presence of almighty God ? And, whether he can take his affirmation about the truth of the matter contained in the said certificate ? What then should hinder this clause from standing as a part of this b— ?

Q. Fabius Maximus confirmed the same opinion, and further added, That it appeared to be an easy matter for the people, who scrupled the taking an oath, to give their affirmation to the truth of the certificate ; and that, in case the certificate comes from America to England, it can easily be attested, by the board of trade, in whose office the hand-writing and seal of such bishops and pastors, as are authorized to grant certificates,

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are left ; or by the pastors of the brethren, who are settled in London, Yorkshire, &c.

But Cn. Domitius Calvinus, not being satisfied, declared in a few words, That the matter in debate was of the highest consequence ; that therefore it ought to be well considered ; and that he was of opinion, some check ought to be put upon a people, who scruple to take up arms in the defence of a country that receives them, and is to venture the lives of its natural born subjects for their protection.

However, my l—d S——s insisted, that there could no such inconveniency arise from the certificates, as some had insinuated ; for, as he added, it is customary in some parish cases, and on other occasions, for persons that are neither the minister, nor the church-warden, to give certificates or affidavits in their names ; as also in cases where persons are impowered to receive money ; and, therefore, why should these certificates meet with so much opposition, especially as the clauses are not made better by any of the amendments proposed ? And as for the difficulty of knowing which pastor is nearest to Westminster-hall ; I know, said he, the brethren have pastors in Yorkshire, and in London, which removes that objection.

L—d B—, having confirmed all that had been urged in favour of the clauses as they stood, added, that it was his opinion the said clauses had been well considered beforehand ; and that the difficulties, now started against them, did not appear to him of any great weight.

Upon which Cn. Domitius Calvinus assured their l—d—ps, that he had no intention to oppose the b—, which promised so advantageous an addition to the British colonies, and to this nation ; neither was he desirous to drop the clauses in debate ; but, said he, I'm still of opinion, that some amendment ought to be made ; for whoever claims the privileges contained in the act, by producing such a certificate, as the first clause requires, should also himself be bound to take his affirmation, that the certificate had been duly executed ; or produce sufficient evidence of the truth of the matter contained therein : which is so reasonable, that I am persuaded the deputies of the brethren will make no manner of difficulty to agree to it.

But this did not prevent the l— b— of W—r—st—r's delivering his opinion concerning these people, and their case.—I own myself, said he, a friend to the b—, and to the people who petition for it.—Our Moravian brethren are an antient episcopal church, which preserved itself from the errors of popery in the most hazardous times, as might be proved, was
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it necessary, in this noble assembly, to relate the many and great sufferings it has undergone, on that account, for the four last centuries. Of all protestants, they come the nearest to the established church of this kingdom, in their doctrine and constitution. And, tho' the enemy has persecuted them from several quarters, the soundness of their faith, and the purity of their morals, have defended them from any imputation of popery and immorality; neither of which has ever been laid to their charge by their most inveterate persecutors. And as they are proved to be a quiet, industrious, and wealthy people, I humbly presume, their settling in a country, where good morals are so much wanting, will be a great advantage to us, and engage every one, that wishes well to his own country, to look upon this act to be a wise and beneficial regulation. I am no ways apprehensive, that the granting the two privileges requested by the brethren, for their scrupulous members, can be attended with any inconveniency to this nation. And as those two points don't make a part of the doctrine of their church, I dare say, they will in time drop more easily, and be quite forgot. Besides, I can't help thinking, that the other members of the church, who do not scruple to defend themselves, and yet have so much love for their weak brethren, as to pray a forbearance with them in these two points, will also take care to defend them in time of necessity.—The two clauses so much debated, as they were not inserted to oblige the brethren, but at the request of the board of trade, as I am credibly informed, have been acquiesced to by the brethren, to gratify the government, who, by this means, will be able at all times to ascertain the numbers and power of this people; and to prevent any scandalous persons assuming their name, and laying claim to their privileges, when they have no right thereto. Therefore, if the certificate, and the enrolling the bishops and pastors of the Moravian brethren at the board of trade is an hardship, it falls upon the petitioners; and if they have nothing to object, we may safely agree to it. Nor can I help expressing my concern, should this bill suffer, or even be delayed, for the sake of so wise a regulation; especially after it has been read twice without any opposition, and the fees have been paid. I therefore hope the clauses may be admitted to stand as they do, without any alteration; which otherwise might keep the brethren in suspense; or be a means to hinder them from making use of the first season to send over a part of their people to our colonies in America.

C. Plinius Cæcilus, not content with what had been said in

favour of the b—, as then worded, urged, that a clause should be inserted to punish any one who should answer falsely and corruptly to a judge or magistrate concerning the certificate, as in the case of perjury ; which punishment, his l——p insisted, ought to be mentioned expressly in the law, or there could be no security.

Then Cn. Domitius Calvinus moved, that the committee might be adjourned ; and said, he did not doubt but that all parties, in the next committee, would agree to such alterations, as should be found proper for the security of the state, and to the satisfaction of the deputies of the Moravian church.

The next committee on the 1st of May, 1749, was opened, by reading the clause of exemption from bearing of arms ; after which my l—d H——x spoke to the following effect :—I don't presume to correct or amend what was so well and judiciously stated in the last committee ; but as the post, which I have the honour to hold, calls upon me to consider the subject in debate with more extraordinary attention, I think it my duty to deliver my thoughts about it with the greatest freedom. But, before I enter upon the enacting part, it is my opinion, that before any one raiseth objections against a b—, or desires to consider them, when made, he ought first of all to weigh well the general tendency or aim thereof, whether it be to the utility and welfare of the common weal ; for, if it don't answer that good end, the most minute objections are of weight, and deserve a serious discussion : but if it be, we ought to pay no greater regard to the most important objections, than to make them serve to put the matter in debate under some better regulation, without endeavouring by any means to overthrow it.

Now it is allowed, that the general aim of the act before us being to admit an industrious, quiet, and wealthy people to settle in our plantations in America, under certain privileges or exemptions ; both policy and christian charity speak in behalf of this aim : forasmuch as the strength and support of our fleets, in a great measure, depends upon the well peopling of our colonies ; which makes every proposal for that end of the utmost importance to this nation, which ought to be always upon its guard against a neighbouring kingdom, jealous of our prosperity, snatching at all opportunities to aggrandize itself : and, tho' the want of toleration in religion, is a great disadvantage to them, endeavouring by all other ways and means to promote and encourage its colonies, with the same view to strengthen their power by sea : shall we then in policy let slip
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any advantage in an affair of so great importance, and in which our christian liberty of conscience gives us the preference? As to christian charity, it calls upon us to support, to the best of our power, a church so respectable for its antiquity; so pure in its doctrine; so truly apostolic in its constitution, and, what is of more weight with me, so remarkable for the good morals of its members; which, my l—ds, I am thoroughly convinced is the best proof and test of the inward purity of the Heart. Therefore I am for removing all obstacles, and for thankfully receiving such a people under our protection, who have suffered so long, and so much, from the common enemy of all protestants. Yet,

I must confess, I have had some real objections against that clause in the enacting part, which is to exempt the brethren from bearing arms; objections which seem to be of no small importance.—For it is reasonable to suppose that many good people in America will readily join with a church so much esteemed for its decency, purity, and morality; and if those converts also should scruple to bear arms, in case of need; where shall one find a sufficient force to defend our colonies, in case of an invasion, when the numerous body of the Moravian brethren are absolutely exempted by this act?—In order to prevent this inconvenience, I had inserted by an amendment, at the beginning of the clause of exemption from military service, thinking it would be better to express it in this manner: ‘That every person, who is a member of the said church, and who shall transplant himself, and reside in any of his majesty’s colonies in America, HIS and HER POSTERITY FOR EVER.’ But I have discovered greater difficulties in my amendment than those I endeavour’d to obviate. And having also reflected that there is no word in this act, relating to soldiers and mariners, but only to those who are summoned; and that summoning is not our way of inlisting soldiers, every one being left to his own free choice whether he will serve the king in a military capacity, or not; except in those emergent cases, when his majesty is impowered to press men into his service; and as in these cases, I apprehend, the exemption of the brethren will be no sufficient plea, I dropt my own amendment, and turned my thoughts upon the supposed detriment such an exemption from personal service in the militia might be to the colonies, whose chief strength depends upon a proper regulation of this service, and from which no doubt the brethren will have a right to claim an exception by this act. But, ‘tho’ this objection carried the greatest weight with me, I, upon mature con-

consideration, am convinced, that, as they oblige themselves to pay an equivalent in money, such an exemption can't properly affect the militia.

Nor am I for limiting or restraining these privileges to the present brethren, and their sole posterity, who transplant themselves to America from other parts; and denying them to those who may unite with them in the British dominions: Because, first, such a Proviso would render the end and purpose of the act entirely void and of none effect. Secondly, the difficulties that would follow a limitation of the privileges to the posterity of the brethren, and the ascertaining those who ought to be intitled to it, are insurmountable, besides the absurdity of confining the privileges to persons instead of opinions; and because, thirdly, This would be striking at the root of toleration, of whose blessed effects we are very sensible; and consequently it would alarm the Presbyterians, Quakers, and all the various persuasions of dissenters, to see such an inroad made into the liberty of conscience, who might justly apprehend that the next stroke would be a total subversion of the toleration act.

— Having thus declared myself a friend to the b—, I heartily desire that the clause which discharges the brethren from being summoned to bear arms, or do military service, may stand and remain as it is, without any restraint; it being always in the power of the legislature to remedy any inconvenience, if any such should arise from such an indulgence.

Then this clause being agreed to the committee proceeded to the next, concerning the certificates, and the l—b— of W—r—ster informed their l—ps, That notwithstanding this clause had been the subject of much debate in the former committee, he hoped that the amendments which he had to offer, and to which the deputies of our brethren of the Unitas Fratrum and their United Brethren had heartily agreed, would remove all difficulties; which amendments his l— begged leave to read, as proper to be inserted in the second part of the clause after these words, ' Shall produce a certificate,' (add) ' Signed by some bishop or pastor of the said church, &c.'

This, continued that pious and wise prelate, is the substance of the amendments proposed in the last committee: nor do I in the least doubt of the concurrence of those in the opposition, who I am confident desired nothing further than to put the whole affair upon a better footing. So that the deputies of our brethren, who are witnesses to our disinterested proceedings, can inform their brethren abroad, That this delay was not owing to any unwillingness in us to grant them settlements
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in his majesty's colonies, but that it happened wholly and solely through a desire to put their privileges upon a more sure and effectual footing for themselves. — For my own part, they have my good wishes; and I heartily desire that such encouragement may be given them, as may not only induce these our brethren of the Moravian church, but also our brethren of other protestant churches to settle in the British colonies.

The b— passed, Nem. Con. with these amendments, and received the royal assent, which was given by commission on the 26th of May, 1749.

[As the printed report of the committee of the H— of C— was supported by a great number of vouchers, the most material of them have been printed too, by way of Appendix.]

THEY were in general produced for the confirmation of all the several assertions contained in the petition, presented by the deputies of the brethren, the 9th of February, 1748-9. they begin with the full powers given to the deputies by the lord advocate of these churches: then follow the matters in order. In one of the introductions is shewn the reason why the *Unitas Fratrum* speak beside of some United Brethren; namely, because there being many persons from other protestant professions, chiefly not episcopal, who enjoy fellowship with the brethrens church, she not being willing to encroach upon the former constitution of the others, made a provision for them by means of *Tropus*'s; and accordingly invested some of the most considerable divines of the Lutheran and reformed church, with their superintendency. The propriety of such kind of union, had been previously asserted by the university of Tübingen, 1733; and by that of Francfort, 1746.

The petition proceeds to represent that the brethren had settled already in his majesty's colonies, and met with approbation, which is confirmed in the vouchers by testimonies from the governors, and persons of the largest property and concern in the said colonies.

After more added upon this head, the brethren are again considered ecclesiastically, and to prove them an antient church, after a public writing from the chief patriarch of the Greek church, in 1740, acknowledging them (which was never doubted of) to be originally descended from the eastern church; there are subjoined a few of the many testimonies given them by Luther, Calvin, and other divines of those times. To prove further,

ther, that this church has been known and countenanced in England, as well as elsewhere; the manner wherein one of their bishops was received here by king Edward VI. is set forth, he having had a church given him in London, as superintendent of foreign protestants; and then very abundant testimonies from more modern English, as well episcopal as presbyterian, and other divines, are produced.

To these vouchers, which were in the hands of the committee, has been added as a second part to the printed volume (and dedicated to the church of England) 'a fuller account of the doctrine, manners, liturgy, and idiom of the *Unitas Fratrum*,' containing the following pieces: 1. 'The Twenty One doctrinal articles of the Augsburg confession, which is the brethren's confession of faith. 2. (As an Appendix thereto.) The method of preaching laid down in the synod of Bern; which is the brethren's method in that respect. 3. The church litany of the brethren. 4. Extracts from the minutes of all the synods of the *Unitas Fratrum* held these last twenty years, shewing the inward plan of their present conduct. 5. A rationale of the brethren's liturgies. 6. A specimen of the theology of the fathers, &c. for the better understanding of that emphatical, though somewhat forgotten language which the teachers of the *Unitas Fratrum* also use.'

The contents of this second part deserve indeed to be given more largely, because it yields a reader a more satisfactory knowledge of that people; but as this part is printed also separate in 8vo, under the title mentioned, 'An account of the doctrine, &c.' and may be had of the booksellers in town and country, there is less need to give an abstract of it here.

The issue of the report, and the contents of both books is very well known. The most essential point is the wise provision the parliament has made that no body may swear himself into that fellowship, unless he produces a certificate, given him by one of the pastors or bishops, empowered to that effect by the lord advocate, or the synod.

F I N I S.



